



Arts in Action Safeguarding Policy June 2025:

Organisation Name: Arts in Action

Website: artsinaction.co.uk

Safeguarding Lead: Heidi Pendergrast

Contact Number: 07938 162444

Address: 5 , CV10 0EL

1. Purpose and Commitment

Arts in Action is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults engaged in our services. This includes all activities such as:

- Group tutoring / Art lesson sessions
- Community art events and tenders.
- Exhibitions
- School-based sessions
- After-school clubs
- Rare 1:1 tutoring sessions as needed.
- Adult sessions that may involve vulnerable adults
- Sessions for SEND

Our aim is to create a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment where participants feel respected, valued, and heard.

The purpose of this policy statement is:

- To protect children and young people who receive Art in Action's services from harm. This includes the children of adults who use our services
- To provide staff and volunteers, as well as children and young people and their families, with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

This policy applies to anyone working on behalf of Arts In Action, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students.

We believe that:

- Children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- The welfare of children is paramount in all the work we do and in all the decisions we take and that working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare
- All children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have an equal right to protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- Extra safeguards may be needed to keep children who are additionally vulnerable safe from abuse.

We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- Valuing, listening to and respecting them
- Appointing a nominated child protection lead for children and young people, a deputy and a lead trustee/board member for safeguarding
- Adopting child protection and safeguarding best practice through our policies, procedures and code of conduct for staff and volunteers
- Developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures so that all staff and volunteers know about and follow our policies, procedures and behaviour codes confidently and competently
- Recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- Recording and storing and using information professionally and securely, in line with data protection legislation and guidance [more information about this is available from the Information Commissioner's Office: ico.org.uk/for-organisations]
- Sharing information about safeguarding and good practice with children and their families via leaflets, posters, group work and one-to-one discussions

- Making sure that children, young people and their families know where to go for help if they have a concern
- Using our safeguarding and child protection procedures to share concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know, and involving children, young people, parents, families and carers appropriately
- Using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately
- Creating and maintaining an anti-bullying environment and ensuring that we have a policy and procedure to help us deal effectively with any bullying that does arise
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- Ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- Building a safeguarding culture where staff and volunteers, children, young people and their families, treat each other with respect and are comfortable about sharing concerns.

2. Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England.

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)
- NSPCC Safeguarding and Child Protection Standards A summary of the key legislation and guidance is available from nspcc.org.uk/childprotection A summary of the key legislation and guidance is available from nspcc.org.uk/childprotection.)
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- GDPR/Data Protection Act 2018

3. Scope

This policy applies to all Arts in Action staff, volunteers, contractors, tutors, and anyone working on behalf of the organisation.

4. Definitions

- Child: Anyone under the age of 18
- Vulnerable Adult: A person aged 18+ who may need community care services due to disability, age, or illness and may be unable to protect themselves
- Abuse: Includes physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Name: Heidi Pendergrast

Contact: 07938 162444

The DSL is responsible for:

- Ensuring staff understand and follow safeguarding procedures
- Acting as the first point of contact for concerns
- Liaising with external agencies, including LADO and local safeguarding boards
- Maintaining confidential records

All Staff and Volunteers

Must:

- Be familiar with this policy
- Attend safeguarding training
- Report any concerns immediately to the DSL

6. Safe Recruitment and Training

- All staff/volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults undergo enhanced DBS checks
- Staff receive safeguarding induction and refresher training annually
- References and identity checks are part of the recruitment process

6.a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

Art in Action requires all freelance workers and staff who will have any reason to come into contact with young people or vulnerable adults to have undergone an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS, formerly Criminal Records Bureau, CRB) check within the last two years or hold the new continuously updated certification.

Staff : If you have already completed a DBS check for another employer or as an individual in the last 2 years:

- Email disclosing name, DBS number and date of DBS.
- If you are a regular volunteer or staff working for Art in Action and you are not up to date you need to inform us so we can discuss arranging a new DBS check with you. You cannot be left alone with any children without this check.

Staff / volunteers : If you are working with Art in Actions for the first time:

- Ensure you either bring your DBS certificate, or send your update name, DBS number and update number and bring your ID on the first attendance.

If working with Art in Action in a school environment

- All schools or organisations will also ask for photo ID and a copy of the certificate or your update number on the first day. Please have this ready on the day.

Arts in Actions Designated Safeguarding Lead/s (Heidi Pendergrast) are responsible for ensuring DBS system is maintained.

7. Code of Conduct

Staff and volunteers must:

- Prioritise the safety and well-being of participants
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries
- Avoid 1:1 unsupervised situations unless part of planned, approved sessions
- Report all concerns, disclosures, or allegations to the DSL

7.a Code of Practice Whilst Working with Young People and Vulnerable Adults additional notes :

● No more time should be spent alone with young people or vulnerable adults than is necessary. Please see note on guidance for 1-2-1 tutoring .

● It is important not to have physical contact with young people or vulnerable adults and this should be avoided.

● You should not take young people or vulnerable adults alone in a car on journeys, however short.

● Do not make age-inappropriate remarks to or about a young person or vulnerable adult.

● It is important not to deter young people or vulnerable adults from making a 'disclosure' of abuse through fear of not being believed, and to listen to what they have to say. You must make it clear to young people or vulnerable adults that their confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in respect of safeguarding issues. If this gives rise to a safeguarding concern it is important to report such concerns to the lead artist on project and not to attempt to investigate the concern yourself, or if the lead artist is not available a Designated Safeguarding Lead.

● If a child makes a disclosure, make simple notes if possible, do not ask questions or leading questions or give opinions, do not promise to keep a secret, and state that anything you hear that would make them unsafe we will have to report.

● Remember that those who abuse young people or vulnerable adults can be of any age, ability, (even other young people or vulnerable adults), gender, ethnic background or class, and it is important not to allow personal preconceptions about people to prevent appropriate action taking place.

● Good practice includes valuing and respecting young people and vulnerable adults as individuals, and the adult modelling of appropriate conduct – which will always exclude bullying, shouting, racism, sectarianism, homophobia, sexism, caste discrimination or any other form of bigotry.

REMEMBER

If you have any concerns regarding safeguarding issues you should immediately discuss it with the lead artist of your project, or Art in Actions senior staff or board members directly.

In the event that a senior member of staff is unsure how to proceed in the event they suspect a young person or vulnerable adult is at risk, they should refer to the details provided by :

- [Coventry's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub \(MASH\) – Coventry City Council](#) or Latest Safeguarding Guidance “Right help, right time”
- http://www.lscpbirmingham.org.uk/images/RHRT_2018/Right_Help_Right_Time_Guidance.pdf
- Children's Advice & Support Service (CASS) 0121 303 1888

8. Ratios and Supervision Guidelines

Ratio guidelines may be different for different elements of activity and groups. For instance some fall under tutoring other fall under community group and youth sessions or charitable tenders that require different recommended ratios and staffing. Projects for other charities or organisations dependant of projects have additional guidelines and protocol that are adjusted for each project and a document will be drafted for each one specifying the ratio of child to adult and number of staffing on site needed for each project. These will be found under the safeguarding policy area for each project.

Based on NSPCC guidance, Tutoring company advice and Arts in Action's risk assessments for Educational Tutoring Sessions in small groups in a studio setting a guideline ratio has been produced. This is for unaccompanied children, most students arrive and stay with parents. In most occurrences, only 1 or 2 children are left unaccompanied in any session for group tutoring however in the occurrence more children are unaccompanied the following ratios serve as a guideline for good and safe practice (* These numbers are adjusted responsively when needed for working with service users with Disability and Neurodiversity as needed):

Age Group	Recommended Adult : Child Ratio	Notes
Under 6 -	Not left unaccompanied	Group setting studio environment
6-8	1:6 *	Group setting studio environment * Adjusted to the needs of the group.
8 +	1:10*	Maximum unaccompanied children in studio environment. Adjusted to needs of the group.
1:1 tutoring	Rare – Always in open or visible space*	Very rare : Usually in Childs home . If in studio Parent/carer permission – tutor background-checked – sessions can be recorded for recap learning out side of session.

- No adult should be left alone with a child in an unsupervised or unobserved setting unless explicitly agreed with parents/carers and can be recorded as needed.
- All group sessions must have a designated safeguarding-trained staff member present or on-call
- In sessions for charitable or other projects, depending on the regulations for each projects 2 members of staff may be needed at each time. Follow regulations for each individual commission and tender.

9. Online Safety

When offering remote sessions:

- Parental consent must be obtained
- Sessions must be conducted via approved platforms
- Tutors must work in a neutral, professional setting
- No personal contact details are to be shared
- Tutees must be fully dressed and in a suitable surrounding.

10. Responding to Concerns

All concerns must be reported to the DSL. In an emergency where a child or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger, staff must:

- Call 999
- Report to the DSL as soon as possible

The DSL will follow local safeguarding procedures, including referrals to social care or the police if necessary.

10.a What is Abuse?

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons.

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and it may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

The Department of Health in its 'No Secrets' report suggests the following as the main types of abuse:-

- Physical abuse- including hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.
- Sexual abuse- including rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable person has not consented, or could not consent or was pressured into consenting.
- Psychological abuse- including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.
- Financial or material abuse- including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.
- Neglect and acts of omission- including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.
- Discriminatory abuse- including racist, sexist, that based on a person's disability, age or sexuality and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

10.b What to do in the Event of a Disclosure

It is important that vulnerable adults and children are protected from abuse. All complaints, allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously.

This procedure must be followed whenever an allegation of abuse is made or when there is a suspicion that a vulnerable adult or child has been abused.

- Promises of confidentiality should not be given as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the individual.

- A full record shall be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information. This record should be held in confidence except when a disclosure to an authority responsible for the person's safety is necessary. It should be password protected where possible.

- The written record should include information in relation to:
 - ☐ the date
 - ☐ the time
 - ☐ the place where the alleged abuse happened
 - ☐ your name and the names of others present
 - ☐ the name of the complainant and where different, the name of the person who has allegedly been abused,
 - ☐ the nature of the alleged abuse
 - ☐ a description of any injuries observed (ask for sheet of body map if needed from the DL if you observe any injuries)
 - ☐ the account which has been given of the allegation
 - ☐ This should be sent digitally with a time stamp to the designated safeguarding lead who will pass this on to the relevant services.

You must contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.

10.c Responding to an Allegation

Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to a Designated Safety Lead who is the responsible member of staff.

The nominated member of staff/ volunteer shall :

- ☐ telephone and report the matter to the appropriate local social services duty social worker.
- ☐ A written record of the date and time of the report shall be made and the report must include the name and position of the person to whom the matter is reported.
- ☐ The telephone report must be confirmed in writing to the relevant local authority social services department within 24 hours.

10.d Responding Appropriately to an Allegation of Abuse

In the event of an incident or disclosure:

DO:

- Make sure the individual is safe

- Assess whether emergency services are required and if needed call them
- Listen
- Offer support and reassurance
- Ascertain and establish the basic facts
- Make careful notes and obtain agreement on them
- Ensure notation of dates, time and persons present are correct and agreed
- Take all necessary precautions to preserve forensic evidence
- Follow correct procedure
- Explain areas of confidentiality; speak to your manager for support and guidance
- Explain the procedure to the individual making the allegation
- Remember the need for ongoing support.

DON'T

- Confront the alleged abuser
- Be judgmental or voice your own opinion
- Be dismissive of the concern
- Investigate or interview beyond that which is necessary to establish the basic facts
- Disturb or destroy possible forensic evidence
- Consult with persons not directly involved with the situation
- Ask leading questions
- Assume Information
- Make promises
- Ignore the allegation
- Elaborate in your notes
- Panic

It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. This is a task for the professional protection agencies, following a referral from the designated Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer or Child Protection Officer.

10.e Confidentiality

Vulnerable adult or child protection raises issues of confidentiality which should be clearly understood by all.

Staff, volunteers and trustees have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of vulnerable adults with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies and adult social services.

- Clear boundaries of confidentiality will be communicated to all.
- All personal information regarding a vulnerable person will be kept confidential. All written records will be kept in a secure area for a specific time as identified in data protection guidelines. Records will only record details required in the initial contact form.
- If a person confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff tells the adult or child sensitively that he or she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies.
- Within that context, the adult or child should, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.
- Where possible, consent should be obtained from the person before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances obtaining consent may be neither possible nor desirable as the safety and welfare of the vulnerable person is the priority.
- Where a disclosure has been made, staff should let the person know the position regarding their role and what action they will have to take as a result.
- Staff should assure the person that they will keep them informed of any action to be taken and why. The person making the disclosure's involvement in the process of sharing information should be fully considered and their wishes and feelings taken into account.

10.f Recording concerns about adult behaviour

Sometimes concerns might be raised about an adult who works or volunteers with children. This could be because they have:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child
- behaved in a way that indicated they are unsuitable to work with young people

We keep clear and comprehensive records of all allegations made against adults working or volunteering with children, including:

- what the allegations were
- how the allegations were followed up
- how things were resolved
- any action taken

- decisions reached about the person's suitability to work with children.

Keeping these records will enable us to give accurate information if we are ever asked for it. For example:

- in response to future requests for a reference
- if a future employer asks for clarification about information disclosed as part of a vetting and barring check
- if allegations resurface after a period of time.

11. Recording and Confidentiality

- All safeguarding incidents must be recorded accurately, clearly, and confidentially
- Records are stored securely and only accessible to relevant staff
- Information is shared only when necessary to protect a child or vulnerable adult

12. Allegations Against Staff

- All allegations will be taken seriously and reported to the DSL
- The DSL will refer to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) as required
- The staff member may be suspended pending investigation

13. Whistleblowing

Staff are encouraged to report concerns about poor or unsafe practice. Reports can be made anonymously. Whistleblowers will be protected in line with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

13.a Safeguarding Children: Whistle Blowing

Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of a Designated Safeguarding Lead Heidi Pendergrast. If the concern is about Heidi Pendergrast as Director please make a referral to Hayley Eaglen one of the other directors or Coventry MASH.

Although this can be difficult this is particularly important where the welfare of vulnerable adults/children may be at risk. You may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but may not feel able to express your concerns out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to colleagues or you may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or young

person continuing to be unnecessarily at risk. Remember it is often the most vulnerable people/children or young people who are targeted. These people need someone like you to safeguard their welfare.

Don't think what if I'm wrong – think what if I'm right

13.a Reasons for Whistleblowing

Each individual has responsibility:

- to raise concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening
- To protect or reduce risks to others
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself

13.b What Stops People from Whistleblowing

- Starting a chain of events which spirals
- Disrupting the work or project
- Fear of getting it wrong
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers
- Fear of not being believed

13.c How to Raise a Concern

- You should voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you feel you can.
- The earlier a concern is expressed the easier and sooner action can be taken.
- Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning you and why.
- Approach your line manager, a Designated Safeguarding Lead, or complete our safeguarding form as you feel appropriate
- Make sure you get a satisfactory response – don't let matters rest.
- Put your concerns in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates and places where you can.

- A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation but you will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.

13.d What Happens Next

- You should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries.
- Your employer has a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimization.
- No action will be taken against you if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith.
- Malicious allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence.

13.e Self-Reporting

There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty, perhaps a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their line manager so professional and personal support can be offered. Whilst such reporting will remain confidential in most instances, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children.

Further advice and support It is recognised that whistle blowing can be difficult and stressful. Advice and support is available from your line manager and/or your professional or trade union.

14. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or following any significant changes in legislation or guidance.

Next review due: June 2026

Approved by: Heidi Pendergrast, Safeguarding Lead

Other resources :

NCVO provides further guidance on data protection for the voluntary sector:

<https://ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/information/data-protection>

The Information Commissioner's Office provides a guide to the GDPR to help organisations comply with its requirements:

ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr

Clear guidelines for the retention, storage and destruction of child protection records

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/briefings/child-protection-records-retention-storage-guidance>

Keeping Children Safe In Education, DfE, 2023

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64f0a68ea78c5f000dc6f3b2/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2023.pdf

Working Together to Safeguard Children, DfE 2023